

THE WEEK

<https://www.theweek.in/news/india/2019/11/18/festival-in-the-walled-city-of-ahmedabad.html>

Festival in the walled city of Ahmedabad

The festival is aimed at reviving the pols of the old city

Eight-day long Dhal Ni Pol Festival kicked off in Ahmedabad on Monday evening with an exhibition of photographs of the residents residing in the pol and other art works.

The second edition of the Dhal Ni Pol Festival, organised by Brihati Foundation, a city-based organization that is the CSR wing of Claris in the Dhal Ni Pol, is aimed at reviving the pols of the old city and preserving the quality of life of the people.

Founder of Brihati Foundation, Krishna Handa, said that as part of the work being undertaken by them in the pol, homes are aesthetically redone and play spaces are being created for the children.

About two years ago, Ahmedabad was declared World Heritage City by the UNESCO. It was the first city in the country to get this tag.

As part of the festival, a heritage walk will be organized for children of Dhal Ni Pol apart from conducting yoga and food marathon in which women will prepare delicacies and also take part in an eating competition. There will also be music and dance performances, showcasing local talent.

The Dhal Ni Pol has about 400 homes, out of which 92 homes agreed to get facades of their homes painted. Handa said that the painting has been done in a manner that it gives a soothing feeling.

According to her, by March next year, they plan to plant 6,500 saplings in pots outside homes, in which 3,000 plants have been already planted. Handa claimed that the saplings have been planted in consultation with botanists, who in turn have kept in mind the environment of the Pol and even the possibility that some residents might not be able to take care of the saplings. The saplings have been planted in the form of vertical gardens on the main walls of the buildings.

As part of making changes in the pol, dumping yards have been converted into play spaces for children. She said that residents are being given insights on how to keep the neighborhood clean.

Handa said that there is a lot to learn from the years-old pols. Citing an example, she said that almost each home of Dhal Ni Pol has a well, and the drainage line in the pol has been laid in such a manner that water logging does not take place even during monsoons.

She remarked that the residents of the pol were so forthcoming to help for organizing the festival that they made a human chain to pass stones when the truck laden with material could not enter the Pol due to small passage.

Handa said that urbanization has taken a toll on the pol culture. While pointing out that now not a large number of people come to sit out in late evenings, she said that they are advising people not to sell their homes.